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Inmate of the Hamlet: Burns as Peasant Poet

MY TITLE, 'Inmate of the Hamlet', is taken from a letter Burns wrote to Dr Moore in 1787. There, the poet declares his lasting allegiance to those considered his cultural peer-group:

my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, to please my Compeers, the rustic Inmates of the Hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners will allow me to be relished and understood.¹

By exploring the notion of Burns as an 'inmate of the hamlet' I hope to identify the precise ways in which his peasant affiliations affected the poet. In addition, I will consider the lasting influence the 'heaven-taught ploughman' image exerted on Burns's compeers and their poetic descendants.

Scotland has enjoyed a long and noble tradition of working-class writing. The 'hamlet' provided a rich vein of traditional material for Burns to work, from songs to narratives, customs, beliefs and subjects for satire. However, as the word 'inmate' suggests, there was a repressive side to being considered as a 'rustic' phenomenon. The term 'heaven-taught ploughman', invented by Henry Mackenzie in *The Lounger* of 1786 (with a nod to Beattie's 'heaven-taught' Minstrel), is deeply ambiguous. Despite the obvious compliment, the term neglects important aspects of the poet's creativity. Not least, it minimises Burns's knowledge of literary traditions. The 'heaven-taught ploughman' label, drawing on prototypes like Ramsay's 'gentle shepherd' and Macpherson's Ossian, precariously typecast Burns and his self-taught successors. The 'peasant' poet, from a humble background with minimal formal education, would be perceived as a curiosity: inherently inferior and unsophisticated.²

Mackenzie's critique typifies a set of aesthetic assumptions applied to the self-taught. The 'divinity of genius' he saw in Burns was accorded to autodidacts thereafter: double-edged praise implying a lack of conscious artistry. In a similar way, the *Monthly Review* of 1786 admired Burns's 'artless simplicity'. Drawing attention to the writer's 'humble and unlettered station' Mackenzie stated Burns should be patronised: 'to call forth genius ... and place it where it may profit or delight the world; these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority'. The argument Burns deserved charity, even if well meant, did no real favours. Disliking the poems in Scots (read 'even in Scotland' with difficulty), Mackenzie preferred 'almost English' pieces like 'The Vision' and

'To a Mountain Daisy'. These, presumably, showed God's hand on Burns as opposed to those in mundane 'provincial dialect'.³

Burns did, of course, collaborate in creating his myth. Robert Anderson, in 1799, noted the ploughman's consummate role-playing:

It was ... a part of the machinery, as he called it, of his poetical character to pass for an illiterate ploughman ... in company he did not suffer his pretensions to pure inspiration to be challenged, and it was seldom done where it might be supposed to affect the success of the subscription for his *Poems*.⁴

No doubt economic, and even more complex, motivations, affected Burns's presentation for public and semi-public consumption. The self-styled 'Professor of the Belles [*sic*] Lettres de la Nature' (*Letters* i, 73) offered a volatile mix of learned ingenuity.

Burn's correspondence, moreover, suggests what would become a characteristic peasant-poet blend. A resistance to debasing himself, for the benefit of patrons, is combined with an understandable desire to please. Preparing to depart for Jamaica in 1786, Burns complained to Mrs Stewart of Stair about social expectations: 'The obscure Bard, when any of the Great condescend to take notice of him, should heap the altar with the incense of flattery'. If only 'those in exalted stations' realised how their 'condescension & affability' pleased 'their Inferiours' they would treat Burns as well as Mrs Stewart (*Letters* i, 53). At times like this the ploughman-poet role let Burns endear himself, as an unthreatening rustic, to lofty ladies. In a similar way, refining the peasant-poet position as neo-classical Sylvander, Burns claimed spiritual kinship with Mrs McLehose. Together, they were: 'a Poet and Poetess of Nature's making' (*Letters* i, 211).

It was necessary to maintain a finely-drawn balance, when dealing with those who thought themselves socially elevated, to avoid giving offence. In May 1787, recognising the 'benevolence' of his patron Glencairn with the required blend of worth and humility, Burns attributed his success to 'Your good family', avowing 'not selfish design' but his 'devotion' (*Letters* i, 113). After Glencairn's death in 1791, Burns gave a similar assurance to John, the new Earl (*Letters* ii, 191). More openly, to John Gillespie, excise officer, Burns regretted the difficulties he now faced in gaining promotion. While there are no grounds for believing the admiration for Glencairn insincere, Burns's mourning had a poignant twist: 'Among the many wise adages which have been treasured up by our Scottish Ancestors, this is one of the best - "Better be the head o' the Commonality, as the tail o' the Gentry"' (*Letters* ii, 74).

The correspondence with Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop is even more intriguing, revealing Burns's irritation with suspicious patrons (Mrs Dunlop's critical advice surely rankled). He becomes highly defensive at her claim that he will 'grow intoxicated with [his] prosperity as a poet'. On the contrary, Burns

asserted, 'to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity and crude unpolished ideas ... I tremble for the consequences'. Drawing attention to 'the novelty of a poet in my obscure situation', Burns feared the 'tide of public notice', unsupported by 'advantages' would 'recede' (*Letters* i, 85).⁵ The letter, blending independence and melancholic passivity, convinced Mrs Dunlop (temporarily) of Burns's integrity.

Wooing the *literati*, and their acolytes, meant treading a fine line between subservience and friendliness. Burns expressed his predicament succinctly to Mrs Dunlop in 1789. It is tempting to speculate this is a frank confession but there may be a little posturing on the part of the offended innocent:

God help a poor man! for if he take a pecuniary favor from a friend with that acquiescence which is natural to Poverty ... the poor devil is in the greatest danger of falling into an abjectness of soul equally incompatible with the independence of Man and the dignity of Friendship; on the other hand, should he bristle up his feelings [like (*deleted*)] in irritated Manhood, he runs every chance of degrading his [heart (*deleted*)] magnanimity into an exceptional pride. (*Letters* i, 451)

I do not mean to deny that Burns faced real obstacles to creativity due to his poverty and manner of employment. Certainly, he expressed great anxiety relating to semi-professional poetic status. Deploring his treatment of Jean Armour in 1786, Burns termed himself a 'worthless, rhyming reprobate' (*Letters* i, 9) 'a rhyming, mason-making, raking, aimless, idle fellow' to James Smith in 1787 (*Letters* i, 126). There is manifest, heart-rending evidence of the effects of financial crises, like the letter to George Thomson of 1796, pleading for five pounds to pay the 'scoundrel of a Haberdasher' and avoid jail (*Letters* ii 389). Sending three guineas to the bookseller Peter Hill in 1791, Burns wrote with despair, and some prickliness (characteristic of later peasant poets):

Poverty! Thou half-sister of Death, thou cousin-german of Hell ... - By thee the Man of Genius whose ill-starred ambition plants him at the tables of the Fashionable & Polite, must see in suffering silence his remark neglected & his person despised, while shallow Greatness in his idiot attempts at wit shall meet with countenance & applause. (*Letters* i, 65).

The 'simple plough-boy' (*Letters*, i, 343A), while playing up to the heaven-taught ploughman image, hugely resented it. At times, he overstepped the bounds of what was considered to be suitable behaviour for a peasant. Abject apologies followed, as in the letter 'from the regions of Hell' to Mrs Robert Riddell. Damned for 'the impropriety of my conduct yesternight under your roof', Burns offers 'humblest contrition'. He adds, 'my errors, though great, were involuntary - an intoxicated man is the vilest of beasts ... to be rude to a woman, when in my senses, was impossible with me' (*Letters* ii, 272). This

anticipates Lockhart's account of Hogg's impropriety, when 'hauf-seas-over', in addressing Scott as 'Wattie' and Mrs Scott as 'Charlotte' though Burns, perhaps, offended more blatantly.⁶

Seen in this context, Burns's work is a potent mixture of accepting and rejecting the peasant-poet image. On the one hand, he excelled in scenes of rural life from 'Halloween' to 'Tam o' Shanter' (*Poems*, 73, 321). The Muse of 'The Vision' (*Poems*, 62), with her 'wildly-witty, rustic grace' proved a successful type for working-class writers. Hogg's comic Muse in *The Spy* (1810) is very similar to this.⁷ 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' (*Poems*, 72) became a peasant-poet anthem, offering a prototype scene of 'hamlet' life:

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The *lowly train* in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways,
What A**** in a *Cottage* would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there I ween!

The 'toil-worn COTTER', a pious father surrounded by bairns, including a nubile daughter, supping on '*Porritch*', was a powerful model for peasant representations of their world. Few autodidacts escaped its influence, even educated autodidacts like John Leyden and David Gray (university-taught yet considered peasant poets on the grounds of rustic origins).

There are strong hints the poet of 'Scots Wha Hae' (*Poems*, 425) and 'For a' that and a' that' (*Poems*, 482) paralleled his belief, 'The rank is but the guinea's stamp', with his predicament as a peasant poet. In 'The Twa Dogs' (*Poems*, 71) dependant cotters are: 'huff'd, an' cuff'd, an' disrespek't!' by the gentry (paralleling the peasant poet's precarious state). As Caesar says: 'But *human-bodies* are sic fools,/For a' their Colledges an' Schools'. Perhaps 'A Fragment - On Glenriddel's Fox breaking his chain' (*Poem*, 527), too, is allegorical of Burns's position as heaven-taught ploughman. The theme is 'Liberty'; the situation: 'a fox,/ ... caught among his native rocks,/ ... to a dirty kennel chain'd'. This Northern (like the Burnesses) fox canvassed for 'The Rights of Men, the Powers of Women', recalling both Paine and 'The Rights of Women' (*Poems*, 390). By listening, the fox learnt about politics and 'Nature's Magna charta'. It 'Suck'd in a mighty store of knowledge./As much as some folks at a college' and won freedom from its enforced patronage.

'On the death of Echo, a Lap-Dog' (*Poems*, 416) and the pithy tribute, probably by Burns, 'On a dog of Lord Eglintons' (*Poems*, 622), equally sum up the 'heaven-taught ploughman' role, with biting irony:

I NEVER barked when out of season,
I never bit without a reason;
.....
We brutes are placed a rank below;
Happy for man could he say so.

It is in this light an anecdote from Joseph Train's notes of 1829-30 should be read. Burns, fêted in Edinburgh, was encouraged to join a certain company: 'he, at last, observed, "On one condition I shall come. [*sic*] It is that you secure the Learned Pig also to be of the Party." – The Learned Pig was exhibiting in Edinr. at that time'.⁸ (Coincidentally, Hogg would be depicted as the 'boar' of Ettrick).

However ridiculous it is to consider Burns solely as a 'heaven-taught ploughman', the dogma was increasingly held. Currie's biography established stereotypical elements in Burns which conformed to national attributes. The 'Scottish Peasantry', apparently, possessed 'intelligence' without equal:

In the very humblest condition of the Scottish peasants, every one can read, and most persons are more or less, skilled in writing and arithmetic; and, under the disguise of their uncouth appearance, and of their peculiar manner and dialect, a stranger will discover that they possess a curiosity, and have obtained a degree of information, corresponding to these acquirements.

This palatable picture had crucial effects on the image of the peasant poet. Currie asserted the national Muse's attraction to love. The identification of the oral and, by extension, peasant tradition with a lyric tendency would become a commonplace of 'peasant poet' theory. Burns, in this context, was the archetypal Scottish peasant: raised by a religious father and tradition-bearer mother; devoted family-man. While the biographer was right to stress such formative influences, the composite is part fact, part 'Cotter's Saturday Night'.⁹

Currie offers evidence of urbane qualities in Burns (from Dugald Stewart, for instance) but the lasting impression is of the peasant poet who, despite changed circumstances, 'might ... still be seen in the spring, directing his plough, a labour in which he excelled'. For Currie, Burns's peasant affiliations led to 'rudeness' in rhyme, 'strange and uncouth' language and 'repulsive' first impressions mitigated by underlying 'sentiment'. Currie wonders how far Burns might have approached Ariosto, Shakespeare or Voltaire, 'by proper culture, with lengthened years, and under happier auspices'; simultaneously refuting and affirming peasant-poet theory. This codified the process begun by Mackenzie.¹⁰

Swiftly two aspects of the heaven-taught ploughman appeared. First there was the inspired poet of nature. He moved fully formed from Mackenzie and Currie into R. H. Cromek's *Reliques of Robert Burns* (1808). Cromek appreciated 'the wild-flowers of his muse' unabashedly. The *Eclectic Review* of 1809 likened Burns to a 'poetical Franklin', who 'caught his lightnings from the cloud while it passed over his head and ... communicated them, too, by a touch, with electrical swiftness and effect'. Burns had fortunately only experienced 'partial education': 'higher cultivation would unquestionably have called forth richer and fairer harvests, but it would have so softened away the wild and magnificent diversity'.¹¹

Then there was the emphasis on 'Rantin, rovin Robin', drawing Currie's 'dissipated' strand into a view which offended the 'Unco Guid'. Jeffrey, reviewing Cromek's *Reliques* in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1809, raged: 'it is a vile prostitution of language to talk of that man's generosity or goodness of heart, who sits raving about friendship and philanthropy in a tavern, while his wife's heart is breaking'. The only excuse was in 'the original lowness of his situation'. Scott, in *The Quarterly Review* of 1809, was indulgently superior: as 'the child of impulse and feeling', Burns was incapable of sustaining 'the steady principle which cleaves to that which is good'. Burns's soul was 'plebeian' and he lacked the 'chivalry' Scott prized because of 'the lowness of his birth'.¹²

There were, of course, attempts to reject such wilful misrepresentations. Alexander Peterkin's *Review of the Life of Robert Burns* (1815) did not see the poet as 'immaculate and perfect' but decried, in Currie, 'pedantry ... which induces persons of circumscribed habits to regard all beyond the little circle of their own movement ... as low'. Peterkin disliked 'assumptions and errors in reference to "the Scottish rustic"', particularly the presentation of Burns as one of a band of peasant poets: 'a poetical prodigy, on a level with Stephen Duck, and Thomas Dermody; men, the glimmering of whose genius are extinct'. Peterkin raged at the applied epithet 'plebeian poet', given 'the high soul, the manly, sublime, and truly British spirit of Robert Burns'. Among the evidence Peterkin cites is a letter from David Gray, drawing attention to Burns's 'singularly hard' fate. Certain critics, according to Gray, contributed to the poet's demise, by 'caricature' portraits.¹³ Gray was not only Burns's friend but Hogg's brother-in-law, possibly offering the persona, and its inherent grievances, first-hand to the Ettrick Shepherd.

Lockhart, whose *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* (1819) contributed to the creation of the Ettrick Shepherd myth, exhibited some sense in *The Life of Robert Burns* (1828). Burns is presented as a wholly romanticised peasant poet through a reading dedicated to his supposed acolytes, Hogg and Allan Cunningham. Astutely, Lockhart notes Burns's self-awareness: 'how soon even really Bucolic Bards learn the tricks of their trade'. There is justification, too, to the inspirational picture Lockhart produces of Burns, in relation to his peasant compatriots. 'The Cotter's Saturday Night', especially, is admired by Lockhart, for fostering among "the first-born of Egypt" ... feelings which would never have been developed within their being, had there been no Burns'.¹⁴

Allan Cunningham, the Nithsdale Mason, was among those 'inmates of the hamlet' who drew inspiration from Burns. Cunningham exhibits a great deal of sensitivity in *The Works of Robert Burns* (1834). He decries Jeffrey's implication Burns was coarse: 'I see the reluctance of an accomplished scholar to admit the merits of a rustic poet who not only claimed, but took, the best station on the Caledonian Parnassus'. Man and poet are almost identical for Cunningham; sustaining this idea a later, illustrated version of his edition has

plates with the poet 'in situ'. Burns is portrayed as a living character in 'Green Grow the Rashes O' and 'A Man's a Man for a' that'.¹⁵

James Hogg on Burns seemed an obvious project, given the supposed affinity between peasant poets but, although Hogg visited Jean Armour for first-hand research, his main sources were Lockhart and Cunningham. The posthumous *Memoir* (1836) of Burns is, perhaps, more of interest for the light it sheds on the Ettrick Shepherd's notion of the peasant poet, than on Burns. By-now-standard biographical details had profound influences on Hogg's self-presentation as a man with six weeks' schooling, writing on the hillside as he tended his sheep. Hogg discerned scholarly 'jealousy' as interfering with the appreciation of his own work. Hogg dismissed moralistic judgements on the poet, drawing attention, like Scott, to the 'strong passions' which informed Burns's nature and made him 'the splendid meteor of our imagination'. There are implicit parallels, too, between peasant-poet identities and that of the Good shepherd.¹⁶

During the nineteenth century Burns's life was often imbued with a Christ-like quality. Henry Shanks, in his seminal *The Peasant Poets of Scotland* (1881), has Burns born in 'a humble clay biggin' without 'public rejoicing', as 'Nature's great high priest'. Scots should, 'remember his teaching ... and with their hearts attuned to praise evince their love to God, to man, and to the world, in singing by turns the psalms of David and the songs of Burns'. Such images were sustained and reinforced through iconography: the prints of Burns at the plough, for instance, divine inspiration descending on his head; sanctified and sublime, in direct contact with the Muse. The Nasmyth portrait was adapted and sentimentalised into statues throughout Scotland's major cities. Take, for instance, the 1891 statue in Union Terrace, Aberdeen. There, Burns holds a 'mountain daisy' in his left hand, a large bonnet in his right, and stands simpering, his hair side-parted as in Nasmyth. Such a latter-day noble savage provided an attractive image at home and abroad.¹⁷

The prototype of a heaven-taught ploughman did offer real encouragement to Scottish poets of a like background. Contemporary 'compeers' of Burns, like 'Daintie' David Sillar, purloined the image for themselves. Sillar stressed that he was a true peasant poet, in his 'Epistle to the Critics':

I n'er depended for my knowledge
On school, academy, nor college,
I gat my learning' at the flail,
An' some I catch'd at the plough-tail.

Despite the Epistles to Sillar, J. Lapraik and Simson, written before his rise to fame, Burns was less than wholly encouraging to those who tried to jump on his bandwagon. He ignored, for instance, two pedestrian 'Epistles' from the tailor Thomas Walker. Nor was the heaven-taught ploughman particularly helpful to Janet Little 'The Scotch Milkmaid', a protégée of his own patron,

Mrs Dunlop.¹⁸ Such examples question how far the popular poet supported fellow autodidacts.

Nevertheless, the image of 'heaven-taught ploughman', as well as inspiring a host of the poet's 'rhyming friends', was hugely influential on later working-class poets. Hogg claimed to be Burns's natural successor, on more than one occasion. Others agreed. Paralleling 'Burns and the Ettrick Shepherd' in *Blackwood's Magazine* (1819), Wilson thought Scotland the greatest nation in the world for 'peasant poets'. Hogg's strength (and limitations) lay in peasant traditions, relating to 'nature': 'in the imitation of the ancient ballad – and in that wild poetry which deals with imaginary beings'. Scott, and Shanks, considered Hogg to be educationally disadvantaged beyond Burns. For Shanks, Hogg was: 'the only known eminent Shepherd-poet since the days of the sweet singer of Israel', a comparison Hogg made himself. 'The Ettrick Shepherd' would act as a transmission model for later autodidacts.¹⁹

The product of Burns's image as 'inmate of the hamlet' was what might cynically be termed a 'cottage industry', with workshops of 'weaver poets' in Galloway, 'shepherd poets' in the Borders, and the 'artisan poets' of central Scotland. Even a railway 'Surfaceman' like Alexander Anderson (later chief librarian of Edinburgh University Library) adapted elements of Burns's image into his poetic persona, posing for photographs with pick (rather than plough) in hand. A parallel tradition developed in England, with poets like Ann Yearsley and John Jones, many documented in Robert Southey's *The Lives and Works of the Uneducated Poets* (1831). John Clare was fascinated by Burns's work and life and composed several poems, in Scots, after Burns. Intriguingly, *Blackwood's Magazine* considered Clare as part of a peasant-poet quorum whose other members were Burns, Hogg and Cunningham.²⁰

Autodidacts contributed to their own mythologising. From Hogg's 'Memoir' to Janet Hamilton on 'Self-Education' to John Younger's *Autobiography* (1881) a standard tale is told. Grim, hard working-lives are portrayed, replete with struggles and persistence in writing. Without minimising genuine hardships, it seems that such an emphasis was designed to construct near-hagiographical accounts derived from Burns's life. Financial failure was inevitable because of devotion to the Muses. Despite the odd sexual indiscretion (among men at least) peasant poets were expected to be family stalwarts in the tradition of 'The Cotter's Saturday Night'. Periods of ill health were stressed and, paradoxically, early death in the manner of Burns, experienced by Leyden and Gray, ensured some critical attention. This all contributed to the 'lad o' pairts' myth popularised by the kailyard school.²¹

Burns's treatment as the first, great, 'inmate of the hamlet', had dual implications. The *literati's* patronising attitude, on one hand, meant self-taught poets were encouraged into marginalising 'rustic' styles. MacDiarmid thought the idea of 'Burns as a "ploughman poet" has been fatal', and dismissed Scottish autodidactic poetry as 'crambo-clink'. Tom Leonard, in *Radical Renfrew*, has

demonstrated the persistent, negative influence of academic condescension on autodidactic poets. Modern critics, though, from Mary Ellen Brown to Kenneth Simpson, are attuned to the capacity for role-playing which affected Burns and, to a lesser extent, his 'compeers'. On a positive note, too, the idea of the 'inmate of the hamlet', if not strictly applicable to Burns, allowed a rise in poetic confidence among the genuinely self-taught. Writers, from the Scotch Milkmaid Janet Little to the Liberal Baillie James Young Geddes, drew creative energy from the achievements of their fellow 'inmate'. Encouraged by the example of Burns, poets like Ellen Johnson, 'The Factory Girl', and the gardener's daughter, Elizabeth Hartley, expressed themselves in locally-focused, innovative verse.²² While, then, the 'inmate of the hamlet' notion interfered with the appreciation of Burns and his compeers, the 'heaven-taught ploughman' facilitated a new crop of writing, ripe for reassessment.

NOTES

1. J. De Lancey Ferguson and G. Ross Roy (eds), *The Letters of Robert Burns*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1985), i, 88. Hereafter references to Burns's *Letters* are given within the text in parentheses.
2. *The Lounger*, 97 (9 Dec. 1786), reprinted by Donald A. Low (ed.), *Robert Burns, The Critical Heritage* (London, 1974), p. 4.
3. Mackenzie, repr. Low, p. 4; Introduction, pp. 16–17. James Kinsley (ed.), *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1968), Nos 62, 92. Hereafter references to Burns's *Poems* are given within the text in parenthesis. Anderson, reprinted Low, p. 5.
4. Anderson, quoted in Low, pp. 8–9.
5. See William Wallace (ed.), *Robert Burns and Mrs Dunlop* (London, 1898).
6. J. G. Lockhart, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart* (1837–8; reprinted Edinburgh, 1900), vol. 1, pp. 357–58.
7. See James Hogg, 'Mr Shuffleton's Allegorical Survey of the Scottish Poets of the Present Day', *The Spy*, 8 Sept. 1810, 29 Sept. 1810, 2 Nov. 1810.
8. Train Ms, in Robert H. Fitzhugh (ed.), *Robert Burns. His Associates and Contemporaries* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1943), p. 59.
9. James Currie, *The Works of Robert Burns* (1800); reprinted in 2 vols (Montrose, 1816), i p. 3, p. 13.
10. Currie, pp. 158–59, pp. 214–15, p. 268.
11. R. H. Cromek, *Reliques of Robert Burns*, 4th edn (1817), p. iv; James Montgomery, *Eclectic Review*, reprinted Low, p. 42.
12. Francis Jeffrey, reprinted Low, p. 39; Walter Scott, reprinted Low, p. 40.
13. Alexander Peterkin, *A Review of the Life of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh, 1815), p. xiv, p. li, p. lvii, p. lxviii–lxix. Gray quoted in Peterkin, pp. lxxxiii–xc1.
14. See John Gibson Lockhart, *The Life of Robert Burns* (1828); reprinted by William Scott Douglas (ed.), 2 vols (Liverpool, 1914), i, p. 92, p. 106; ii, pp. 202–3.
15. See Allan Cunningham (ed.), *The Works of Robert Burns; with his Life*, 8 vols (London, 1834), i, pp. 365–78. See Allan Cunningham (ed.), *The Complete Works of Burns Illustrated* (London, n.d.).

16. The Ettrick Shepherd and William Motherwell (eds), *The Works of Robert Burns*, 5 vols (Glasgow, 1834-1836), v, especially pp. 1-11, p. 44, p. 63. See James Hogg, 'Memoir of the Life of James Hogg', prefacing *The Mountain Bard* (Edinburgh and London, 1807; revised Edinburgh and London, 1821).
17. Henry Shanks, *The Peasant Poets of Scotland* (Bathgate, 1881), p. 4, p. 31. See illustrations in Carol McGuirk, 'Burns and Nostalgia', Kenneth Simpson (ed.), *Burns Now* (Edinburgh, 1994), Chapter 3.
18. See John D. Ross, *Robert Burns and his Rhyming Friends* (Stirling, 1928), [James Paterson], *The Contemporaries of Burns* (Edinburgh, 1840), p. 38. See Valentina Bold, 'Janet Little "The Scotch Milkmaid" and "Peasant Poetry"', *Scottish Literary Journal*, vol. 20 (Nov. 1993), pp. 21-30.
19. John Wilson, repr. Low, p. 59. Scott, repr. Low, p. 50. Shanks, p. 94; See Hogg's 1821 'Memoir', p. lxxviii.
20. Robert Southey, *the Lives and Works of the Uneducated Poets* 1831, reprinted by J. S. Childers (ed.) (London, 1925). See, for instance, Clare's 'Coy Maidens o' Drysail', *The Later Poems of John Clare*, edited by Eric Robinson and David Powell, 2 vols (Oxford, 1984), ii, 843; and Valentina Bold, 'James Hogg and the Scottish Self-Taught Tradition', John Goodridge (ed.), *The Independent Spirit, John Clare and the self-taught tradition* (Helpston, 1994), pp. 69-86. See John Wilson, *Noctes Ambrosianae*, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1863), i, p. 218.
21. See John Younger, *The Autobiography of John Younger, Shoemaker, St Boswell's* (Kelso, 1881); Janet Hamilton, *Poems, Sketches and Essays* (Glasgow, 1885), pp. 435-47.
22. See Hugh MacDiarmid, *Scottish Eccentrics* (1936; reprinted London, 1972), p. 64; *The Scotsman* (25th Nov. 1959), quoted in Alan Bold (ed.), *The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid* (London, 1984), p. 80; Tom Leonard, *Radical Renfrew* (Edinburgh, 1990); Mary Ellen Brown, *Burns and Tradition* (London, 1984), Kenneth Simpson. *The Protean Scot* (Aberdeen, 1988).